

551.515(767) TORNADOES IN ARKANSAS, APRIL, 1929

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April 10, 1929, may be called a tornado day in Arkansas. The records show but three days on which more places were visited by tornadoes than on that date. Thirty-four places were visited by tornadoes on June 5, 1915, 28 on November 25, 1926, and 25 on May 9, 1927. Eight tornadoes were reported in the northeastern portion of Arkansas during the afternoon and the early portion of the night of April 10, damage being reported at 17 different localities by these storms. The first occurred 3 miles west of Calico Rock, Izard County, at about 3 p. m., the last at Parkin, Cross County, at 8.30 p. m.

The tornadoes of April 10 occurred over an area in the shape of a triangle, the northern edge extending 100 miles eastward from Calico Rock to northern Mississippi County, the eastern edge from northern Mississippi County southward 60 miles to Cross County. The disturbance that caused the tornadoes moved eastward across the area, and, according to reports received at this office, the resulting tornadoes caused the death of 56 persons, injured 213 persons seriously, and destroyed property values at \$795,000. It is thought the number of dead is about correct, but the number of injured and the property losses were much greater than reported.

The first tornado occurred 3 miles west of Calico Rock about 3 p. m. It came from the southwest, causing considerable destruction of timber, but fortunately only a few small buildings were in the path and with the exception of the timber destroyed little damage occurred. It was a small tornado and disappeared after moving a short distance.

A small tornado occurred at Mount Pleasant at 4.30 p. m., doing but slight damage and traveling but a short distance. An eye witness states that the storm was coming from the west but was deflected toward the northeast by a mountain west of the town.

A second tornado visited Mount Pleasant about 30 minutes later. It originated at Harpel a little before 5 p. m. and moved rapidly eastward, striking Guion at 5 p. m. and Mount Pleasant a few minutes later. It covered a path 1,000 feet wide and 18 miles long. It evidently moved very rapidly as it was reported at the three towns at the same time. It was only about 4 minutes from the time it was first seen at Guion until it was gone. Two persons were killed at Harpel, 5 at Guion, and 45 were injured at Guion and 3 at Mount Pleasant. Property valued at \$166,000 was destroyed. Only 3 of the 150 buildings in Guion were left standing. The Izard County Bank was built of concrete blocks, which were strewn in every direction, the vault being torn open as shown in Figure 1. The only shelter for the wounded and the women and children was the three remaining houses and the tunnels to the mines.

Two tornadoes are supposed to have formed near Almond, in Cleburne County, and to have moved slightly north of east. Persons in Batesville who were watching the tornadoes thought they were one tornado until the storms were near White River, where they thought one tornado split off from the other and moved toward the northeast, the other moving on eastward to Moorefield, Independence County, after which it dissipated. The one that changed to a northeasterly course was reported 4 miles west of Charlotte, in the same county, at about 5 p. m., 4 miles north of Cord at 5 p. m. (probably later), crossing Black River north of

Kenyon, in Jackson County, following an east-west section line 3 miles north of Swifton, Jackson County, at 6.30 p. m., and in the Lorado community, Green County, at 7.45 p. m. It is thought that the tornado that formed at Almond was the same one that caused so much destruction near Swifton and in the Lorado community. If it were, it traveled about 65 miles. It was a small tornado at first, skipping along rapidly over a narrow course, but later the path became wider and the storm moved slowly. Near Swifton it was an immense tornado, with extremely high wind velocities, scarcely leaving a thing standing in a path over half a mile wide. High wind velocities seem to have accompanied the storm from the time it formed until it disappeared.

No serious damage was done by either of these storms until Moorefield was reached. Here 10 persons were injured and a property loss of \$20,000 was sustained. The other tornado did but little damage until it reached a thickly settled community along the highway running east and west 3 miles north of Swifton, where 23 persons were killed, 32 were seriously injured, and property valued at \$155,000 was destroyed. The storm soon changed its course again to the northeast into the Lorado community, where 8 persons were killed, 30 were injured, and property losses estimated at \$150,000 were sustained. In the entire course of this storm 31 persons were killed, 72 were injured seriously enough to receive medical attention, and property valued at \$327,000 was destroyed. The tornado was accompanied and followed by rain, hail, and cold winds, causing intense suffering by the injured and homeless. Rescue work was very difficult, owing to the darkness and the storm, some of the dead and injured not being found until the next morning. The usual number of things occurred that can not be explained, the most startling being the fact that the town of Guion, about 296 inhabitants according to the census of 1910, was literally blown away and only 5 persons killed. Houses were blown to pieces and the floor and a bed left with the occupants uninjured, etc. One witness states that when the tornado struck a house it went all to pieces in an instant as though it exploded. There may have been some explosions, due to decreased pressure on the outside, but in most cases it was probably the centrifugal force of the mass of air and debris and the upward currents, carrying the pieces of the houses outward and upward. The heavier pieces would force themselves out farther from the center of the whirling mass.

A small tornado occurred at Diaz, Jackson County, at 6:20 p. m. No one was killed or injured, but the property loss was \$11,000.

Another small tornado occurred at Monette, Craighead County, at 8 p. m., in which no one was killed or injured, but the property damage was estimated at \$40,000.

The eighth tornado of the day originated southwest of Wynne, Cross County, at about 8 p. m. or a little later and moved slightly north of east. The first damage was at Smiths Chapel (no post office), a few miles southwest of Wynne. One person was killed, 37 injured, and a property loss of \$50,000 was reported. The tornado then moved eastward to a community just west of Princedale, same county, where 4 persons were killed and the property loss was estimated at \$5,000. At Princedale 11 persons were killed, 50 were injured, and property valued at \$75,000 was destroyed. The tornado

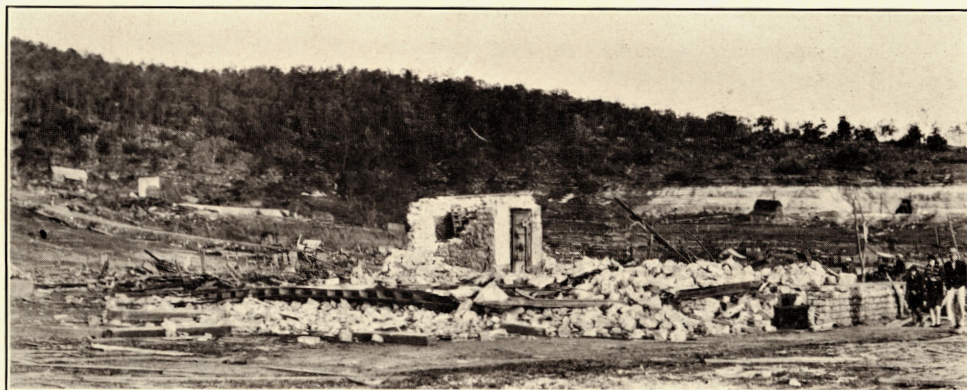
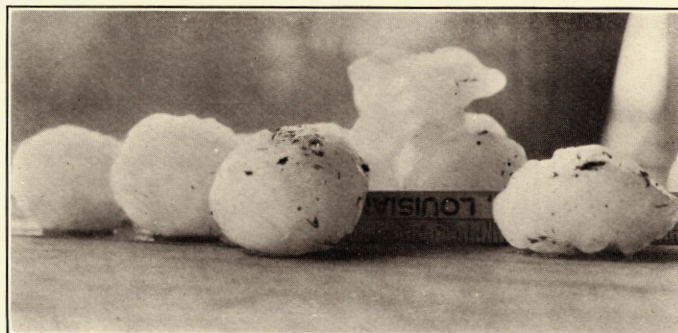
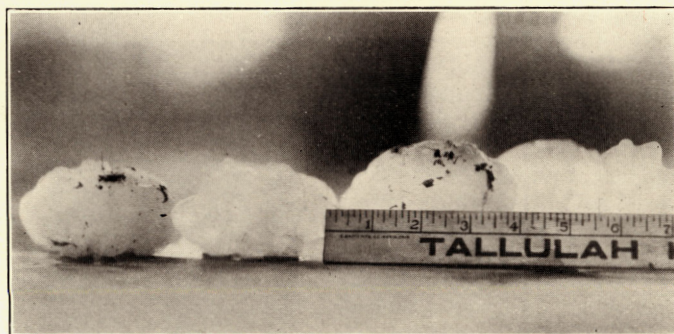


FIGURE 1.—Ruins of the IZARD County Bank at Guion, one side and top of vault torn off. Building made of concrete blocks. Photo by Carl Olsson



Hailstones at Tallulah, La., April 21, 1929

then continued its course eastward 4 or 5 miles to Parkin, where 1 person was killed, 4 injured, and a property loss of \$70,000 was sustained.

High pressure prevailed over the Canadian Provinces and west of the Rockies, low pressure elsewhere on the morning of the 10th, the principal low center being over eastern Kansas with a reading of 29.46 at Wichita. At the time of the evening observation the low had moved southeastward to north-central Arkansas, the lowest reading being 29.58 at Little Rock. By the morning of the 10th it had moved almost due northward to eastern Iowa. The low was nearly round or slightly elliptical, the longer axis being nearly north and south most of the time.

We would not think of this kind of a map when speaking of a tornado map. We usually think of tornadoes in connection with an elongated low, the longer axis extending northeast and southwest, or a trough of low pressure with low centers over the Lakes and Texas.

The tornadoes of the 10th occurred from about 50 miles to 150 miles from the center of the low. The ones that occurred first were moving from the southwest, those that occurred a little later were moving from slightly south of west or west, those still later were from the southwest again, the one that continued from 4 p. m. to 7:45 p. m. changing its course first coming from the west, then from the southwest, from the west again, and later from the southwest again. As nearly as we can determine the storms followed the isobars most of the time. It is difficult to show why the tornado at Calico Rock, the first one at Mount Pleasant, and the first one at Moorefield were from the southwest, and the ones so soon after were from nearly west, especially the second storm at Mount Pleasant and the one at Moorefield. The first and second storms at Moorefield were in sight at the same time. With the exception of the Lorado community these storms were moving almost directly eastward when they were causing great destruction of life and property.

There seem to have been three fronts or disturbances along which the tornadoes formed. The first reached Calico Rock at 3 p. m. and Mount Pleasant at 4.30 p. m. The second passed Almond at 4 p. m., Moorefield at 4:20 p. m., Charlotte at 5 p. m., Swifton at 6.30 p. m., Lorado at 7.45 p. m., Monette at 8 p. m., and Parkin at 8.30 p. m. The third passed Harpel, Guion, and Mount Pleasant in quick succession at about 5 p. m. The storms that formed along the first moved from the southwest, those along the second from the west until after 6.30 p. m., then from the southwest most of the time, the one along the third from the west.

A small tornado occurred at Subiaco, Logan County, on April 14, destroying a few small buildings, but not doing any serious damage.

On April 20 tornadoes occurred at Buckner, Lafayette County; Clinton, Van Buren County; London, Pope County, and Oil City (4½ miles south and 3 miles east of Batesville). Three persons were injured at Oil City, the property damage at all places on the 14th and 20th being about \$34,000.

A tornado occurred on April 21 at Tillar, Drew county, causing the death of 12 persons, the serious injury of 2 others, and property damage estimated at \$1,000. This was a small storm but struck two houses, causing the deaths mentioned.

The total number of places visited by tornadoes in Arkansas during April was 22, one of these places being visited by two tornadoes in about half an hour. Sixty-eight persons were killed in these storms, 218 injured, and property losses amounting to \$830,000.

The following table, gives considerable detailed information that is not given in the text:

Tornadoes in Arkansas, April, 1929

Location	Date, April	Hour	Width path	Length path	Direction from which storm came	Number killed	Number injured	Damage
		<i>p. m.</i>	<i>Feet</i>	<i>Miles</i>				
Almond.....	10	4:00	Narrow.	65	WSW.	0	0	\$2,000
Calico Rock (near).....	10	3:00	650	1	SW.	0	0	Slight.
Charlotte (4 miles west).....	10	5:00	600	65	SW.	0	0	Slight.
Cord (3 miles north).....	10	5:00				0	0	1,000
Diaz.....	10	6:20	900	2	SW.	0	2	11,000
Guion.....	10	5:00	1,200	18	W.	5	45	200,000
Harpel ¹	10	4:50		18	W.	2	0	1,000
Lorado (southwest Green County, no post office).....	10	7:45	3,500	65	SW.	8	30	150,000
Monette.....	10	8:00	650	2	SW.	0	0	40,000
Moorefield.....	10	4:20	500	65	WSW.	0	10	20,000
Mount Pleasant.....	10	4:30	Narrow.	Short.	SW.	0	0	Slight.
Do.....	10	5:00	1,000	18	W.	0	3	15,000
Parkin.....	10	8:30	300	16	WSW.	1	4	70,000
Prinedale (west of).....	10	8:30	Narrow.	16	WSW.	4		5,000
Prinedale.....	10	8:30	300	16	WSW.	11	50	75,000
Smith's Chapel (no post office, southwest of Wynne).....	10	8:30		10	WSW.	2	37	50,000
Swifton (3 miles north of).....	10	6:30	2,640	65	W.	23	32	155,000
Subiaco.....	14	(*)	Narrow.	Short.	SW.	0	0	Slight.
Buckner.....	20	3:30		Short.	SW.	0	0	1,000
Clinton.....	20	7:25	600	Short.	SW.	0		11,000
London.....	20	6:30	300	Short.	SW.	0	0	9,000
Oil City ²	20	8:45	225	Short.	NW.	0	3	13,000
Tillar.....	21	2:45	Narrow.	5	W.	12	2	1,000

¹ Southwest Green County.

² After 5 p. m.

³ Before 8.30 p. m.

⁴ Afternoon.

⁵ 4 miles south, 3 miles west, of Batesville.